

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), I have been requested by the chief government whip and the chief opposition whip to defer the division until a later time.

[English]

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until tomorrow at 10 a.m., at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

[Translation]

It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FIRST NATIONS HOUSING

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of improving housing for First Nations people, and in particular First Nations elders.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to present to the House for consideration and debate a motion that I consider to be of utmost importance.

It almost goes without saying that the living conditions endured by many of Canada's first peoples are deplorable. Study after study have established mountains of facts to support the need for addressing this serious problem. Year after year the federal government has found a new reason, a new excuse not to take the action that is required. The House's own standing committee said exactly that in its December 1992 report to Parliament "A Time for Action".

Private Members' Business

I would hope that MPs from all parties here today would support this motion so that the weight of Parliament can be added to the voices from First Nations communities calling for action on housing.

Before this debate today I called around to some of the leading voices in Indian country to get an up to the minute reaction to the current state of Indian housing. Briefly, they all speak in unison: not much has changed, the federal government must act immediately.

If we look at some available statistics and read some of the recent newspaper articles we can tell that the situation is actually getting worse. The Assembly of First Nations tells us that an assessment of the on reserve housing stock in 1984 indicated that 47 per cent of the stock failed to meet basic standards of physical house conditions, 36 per cent was seriously overcrowded and 38 per cent lacked some or all the components of basic amenities by which I mean running water, indoor toilets, a bath or a shower.

By comparison, a 1991 report by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development indicated that of the 64,402 housing units on reserve 56 per cent failed to meet basic standards of physical house conditions. Of these 24 per cent require major renovation and 10 per cent require complete replacement. Thirty-one per cent have neither piped nor well water and 31 per cent in 1991 had neither piped sewage service nor septic fields.

Among the newspaper reports that I have in front of me is one that is written about a reserve in my own constituency. The headline from the October 19 issue of the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* reads: "Waiting list long for homes on reserve". It concerns the situation on the Mistawasis Indian reserve just 75 kilometres west of the city of Prince Albert.

After a fire left a family of eight homeless there was no replacement to be found. According to Mistawasis Chief Leona Daniels, quoted in the newspaper article, the band has 52 applications for houses from band members waiting for adequate housing. This number is not unusual says the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the organization that represents most of the province's Indian bands. This number is not unusual because among all the reserves there is likely a shortfall of some 800 houses in Saskatchewan at this moment.

• (1735)

At the Red Pheasant reserve just south of Battleford, also within my constituency, Chief Mike Baptiste says there is a current shortfall of 146 units. The band has a number of young families on reserve looking for their own homes. There are a number of elders who are crowded into the homes with many children. There are many band members currently living off reserve who want their children to be raised on the reserve and attend the band administered school but they cannot because there is no housing available.